Palliative Medicine Study Guide

Introduction

By definition and in practice the role of the physician is to care for the patient in and through the treatment of disease. Generally the treatment of disease means its cure or at lest the diminishment of its impact. There are, of course, many situations in which the disease or its effects cannot be completely addressed including those which will lead to the patient’s death. The growing field of palliative medicine addresses itself to the needs of a patient as a whole person with special attention paid to the management of suffering and increasing the quality of life. Of physicians it requires not only knowledge of disease but the ability to attend to the wider context of the patients own experience of illness.

Objectives

At the end of this session you will be able to:

1. Explain the field of Palliative Medicine and its development as a subspecialty in the United States.
2. Reflect on ways in which the current health care system can serve as a barrier to the achievement of quality palliative care.
3. Explain the goals of palliative medicine and the ways in which palliative medicine differs from hospice care.

Preparation

Before Class you should:
- Read the articles on file
- Read the case of Andrew
- Reflect on the questions for section

Process

Begin in Lecture with Dr. Lynn Hallerman, the director of Palliative Care at Stony Brook (Click to Read about SUNY Palliative Care)

Class will begin with a lecture on the development of palliative medicine in the United States, review of the observational data of the experience and course of the patient with life limiting illness and an introduction to palliative medicine services at Stony Brook.

Following this presentation we will adjourn to small groups. Each group will review the “Case of Andrew.” With the faculty facilitator, the group will consider the following:

1. Identify Andrew’s distressing physical, psychosocial and spiritual symptoms.
2. Does his wife have distressing symptoms? Is it the role of the palliative care team to address her suffering as well?
3. What advice would you give to Andrew and his wife about discussing his diagnosis with their daughter?
4. Is this patient a candidate for hospice care?
Study Questions
See above.

Articles on File
2. Steinhauser KE et al. Factors considered important at the end of life by patients, family and physicians and other care providers. JAMA 2000;284: 2476-2482
3. Eric J. Cassell, The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Medicine

About our Lecturer

Lynn Hallarman, MD (Program Director) Dr. Hallarman holds the rank of Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine in the Division of Hematology/Oncology in the Department of Medicine at SUNY Stony Brook School of Medicine. She is board certified in Internal Medicine and Palliative Medicine. She is a graduate of Yale University School of Medicine and completed her residency training at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, NY. Her first academic position was at Tufts University School of Medicine in 1997 where she served primarily urban, poor and elderly patients. Dr. Hallarman joined the staff of the VA affiliate of the University of Maryland in 1999 where she continued her career as a clinician-educator and developed her interest in the care of the dying through her clinical work in primary care. In 2003, Dr. Hallarman was hired as the VA Maryland Health Care System’s first director of Palliative Care. Dr. Hallarman successfully grew palliative care services at the VA until 2006 when she accepted the position as the Director of Palliative Care Services for SBUMC. She has been extensively involved in the education of medical students, residents and fellows throughout her career. She was a participant in the roll out of University of Maryland’s web based palliative care curriculum and their 3rd year required palliative care course. She has been an active participant in local and state boards, councils, and committees addressing the needs of patients and families coping with life-limiting illness and end stage disease.